

REMARKS

The Examiner stated that the claims in the application are directed to multiple inventions. The Examiner stated:

This application contains the following Inventions or groups of Inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 1-20, drawn to an inerting method.

Group II, claim(s) 21-23, drawn to device for extinguishing a fire.

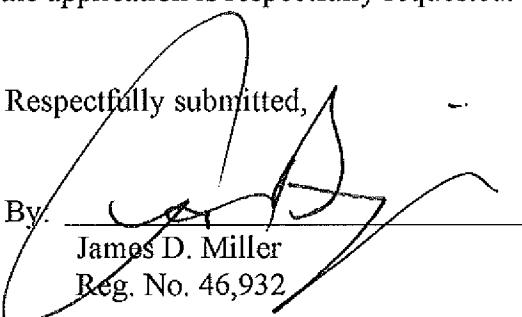
The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: In the instant case the process as claimed does not require the use of an oxygen/inert gas sensor, a fire detector, an inert gas mechanism or a control/regulating means while the product as claimed does not require the apparatus to be in a closed room.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

In accordance with the Examiner's requirement, applicant elects to prosecute Group I, Claims 1-20. Applicant's election is made without prejudice to introducing the non-elected species in a later filed divisional application.

In view of the above election, applicant believes the application is now in condition for an action on the merits. Favorable consideration of the application is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,
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